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Fundamentals of Being a Military Advisor

Maj Tom Chalkley, USMC

References: FM 31-20-3; Advisor Handbook; FM 6-22; CALL Advising Foreign

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Outline

- The Goals of Advisory Assistance
- The Key Factors That Make an Effective Advisor
  - Establishing Rapport
  - Establishing Credibility
  - Providing Value…to a Counterpart's Goals
- Tips, Pitfalls, Warnings

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"In the final analysis, it is their war. They are the ones who have to win it or lose it. We can help them, we can give them equipment, we can send our men out there as advisers, but they [the people] have to win it…"

President John F. Kennedy

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**“Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than you do it perfectly. It is their war,
and you are to help them, not win it for them.”**

- T.E. Lawrence, 1917

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Security Force Assistance Imperatives

- Understand the Operational Environment
- Employ Effective Leadership
- Ensure Legitimacy
- Manage Information
- Ensure Unity of Effort/Purpose
- Ensure Sustainability

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What is Our Goal (End State)?

- Train, deploy and fight Afghan National Security Forces that are. . .
  - Competent
  - Committed
  - Capable
  - Confident

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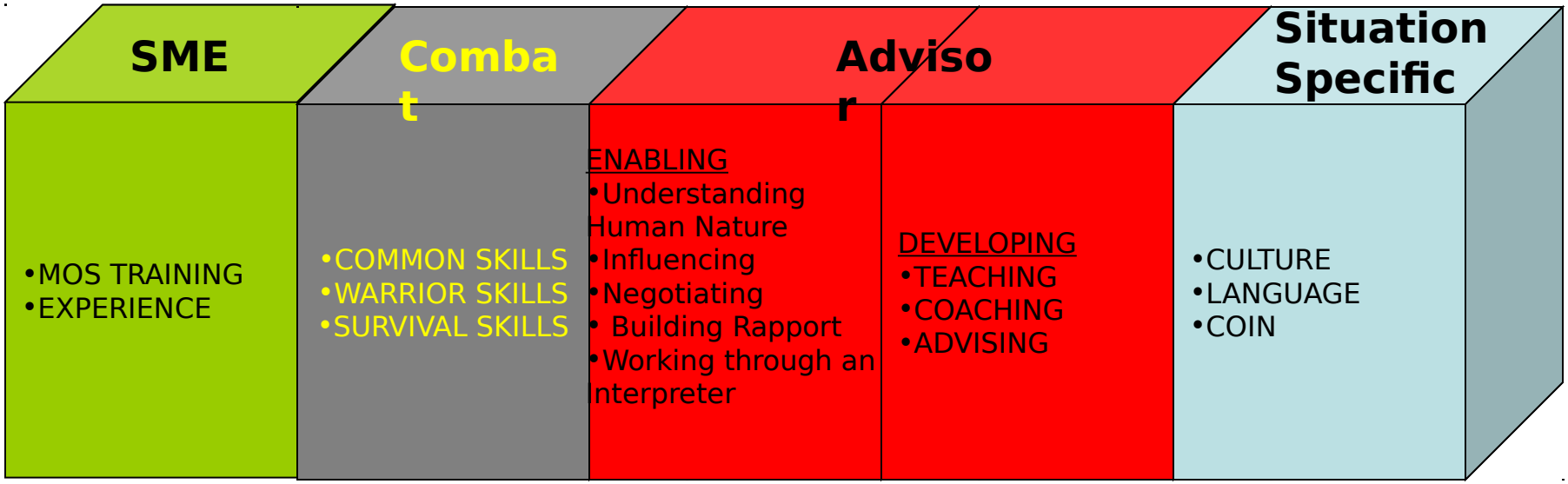
Advisor Skill Set



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The Key Factors That Make an Effective Advisor

- The amount of influence with a counterpart is directly proportional to the total sum of a combination of factors. These factors include:
  - Rapport
  - Credibility
  - Overall Value (contribution to a counterparts goals).

Legitimacy

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Advisor Qualities

- Mature
- Professional
- Competent
- Patient
- Knowledgeable
- Confident
- Culturally Effective
- Situationally Aware

Modern belief of the Influence Equation

$$\frac{Rapport + Credibility + Value}{} = Influence$$

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The Subtle Difference of Influence

- Mediocre advisors = liaison role with a counterpart

- Great advisors = Host Nation commander's intent and guidance; Credit to HN forces

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Advising Truths

- Make a Personal Investment
- Make a Subjective Assessment
- Establish a HN Training Cadre
- Take cultural factors into account BUT discern the difference between culture and excuses

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Advising Truths

- Manage Expectations
  - ANA
  - ISAF
  - People
  - OMLT
- Must continuously reinforce basic skills
  - Leadership
- What is good enough?
- Be flexible and adaptable; the truth will change constantly

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Establish Rapport

Rapport: "mutual trust and emotional affinity"

- the "lubricant" that enables all other activities to occur more smoothly

- **Genuine** rapport is developed slowly over time, but can be ruined in an instant

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Skill Sets that Contribute to Building Rapport

- Cross Cultural Communication skills.
- Language Skills and/or the ability to utilize an interpreter.
- Respect for a counterpart's rank, age, status and experience.
- Interpersonal Skills.
- Negotiation Skills.
- Enthusiasm and positive attitude.

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Gain and Maintain Rapport

- Identification of common ground
- Workable level of mutual trust and confidence
- Themes
  - Professional military officers and soldiers
  - Working toward a common goal – secure and stable Afghanistan
  - You are confident, competent and capable
  - Respect
  - Never expect or demand your soldiers to do something you are unable or unwilling to do

Gain and Maintain Rapport

- A Military Advisor's day does not end at 1700
- Avoid creating a community within the community
- Not all soldiers can handle this assignment
- How you are perceived?

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Credibility Skills

- Credibility: “worthy of confidence”
  - Leadership
  - Courage
  - Discipline
  - Maturity
  - Judgment
  - Decision Making Ability
- Character is constantly being evaluated
- Understand the motivations and perspectives of:
  - HN counterparts, superiors, subordinates
  - Indigenous Population
  - Adversaries
  - Others

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Credibility Skills

- **Provide good advice**
- **Provide good planning advice**
- **Provide valuable tactical advice**

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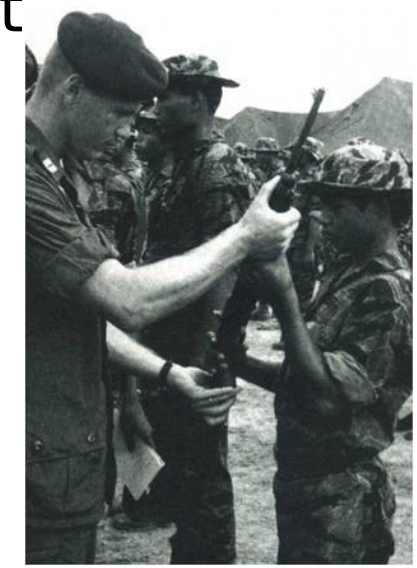
Value to a Counterpart's Goals

What Motivates your Counterpart? How can he use you to achieve his goals?

- Links to Coalition funding and equipment
- Political / Positional Clout
- Links to Coalition Intelligence
- Links to Coalition Close Air Support/MEDVAC
- Coalition Training
- Operational and tactical advice



Video Discussion

Video: ANA and ISAF relationship. 2007, during a raid with ANA, ISAF aircraft was overhead.

- What happened?
- How can we prevent this?

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Questions ?

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Tips/Pitfalls/Warnings for Advisors

Every culture is different, your Afghan soldiers do not and will not think like Europeans

Know your target audience, adapt your methods to their personality

- Don’t confuse poor leadership and poor training with cultural differences

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Tips for Advisors

- **Eat and sleep with your units (<u>share hardships</u>)**
- **Team dynamics support rapport**
- **Participate in operations.**
  - **Prevent/document abuses by HN**
  - **Gather info from detainees during field interrogations.**
  - **Assist in building targets and follow-on missions**
  - **Coordinate between HN and ISAF units (air, fires, reserves, dog teams, EOD, medivac, etc)**
  - **Combat advising (CQB, security, synchronization, medical, infil/exfil, etc)**
- **Continue to assess training and operational level of HN**
- **Ensure long-term sustainment**

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Tips for Advisors

- Exercise Flexibility and Patience
- Start slow - Remember, it's a marathon!
  - Small steps forward are progress
- Remember: Many times HN soldiers risk not only their lives but also those of their friends and family by committing themselves with you
- Advisors must have intimate knowledge of HN weapons and equipment
- Don't assume that execution of the most common tasks is understood

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Tips for Advisors
Assessments

- Conduct Assessments
  - Assess and re-assess unit leadership
  - Assess your units' current level of proficiency in basic tasks
  - Many of the HN units have been operational for some time:
    - You may not be starting from scratch
    - All should have some level of basic training
  - What are their TTPs? If it works, use it

- Adjust Training Plan and Scope of Operations Accordingly

- Constantly Observe HN Unit in Training and on Operations
  - Assess and re-assess unit leadership
  - Look for rising stars
  - What are their TTPs? If it works, use it

- Adjust Training Plan and Scope of Operations Accordingly

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Tips for advisors
Successful Training Models

- Cyclical rather than linear
- Develop an HN training cadre pulled from top performers
  - "Fence" your cadre – they will be highly sought after as unit leaders
- Regular reinforcement training; return to fundamentals
  - Hip pocket reinforcement training - led by HN Cadre
  - Constantly reinforce task and TTPs
- Cumulative training: each task builds on the previous task
- Utilize the smallest possible student to instructor ratio
- Provide immediate positive feedback
- Conduct "AARs" after events
  - May have to be non-standard format (i.e., causal conversation during a meal)
  - address shortcomings in follow-on training sessions
- Obtain HN leadership buy-in to the training plan

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Tips For advisors

Training

Program local holidays, leave, and down time into the units' training plan

- Avoid verbose lectures
  - Make classes hands-on
  - Do not overly rely on notes
  - Encourage questions
  - Use visual training aids at all times to reinforce teaching points and convey methods

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Common Pitfalls for Advisors

- **“Going Native”** and losing sight of Coalition objectives
- Usurping a counterpart’s authority with his subordinates
- Culture Shock…recognize and manage it
- Frustration with ambiguity or lack of clear guidance
- Frustration with a counterpart’s unwillingness to conform to Coalition methods (Doctrine, standards, tactics, techniques)
- Rolling over to please a counterpart - sacrificing credibility to build rapport
- The “Ugly American”

More Common Pitfalls for Advisors

- Caving in to higher HQ pressure before HN unit is ready
- Making empty promises to HN units
- Do what I say, not as I do - not sharing the danger
- Not eating and sleeping with HN
- Not including HN in planning and operations
  - Not including HN in mission analysis and estimate of situation
  - Handing HN a finished plan
  - Keeping HN out of the fight

- Inability to maintain a good working relationship…loss of respect

- Advisors should not assume command

- Failure to understand why counterparts do not demonstrate our “sense of urgency”…never rush into doing “it” for them

- Unable to realize that counterparts will remain and continue to fight long after his tour is over

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Some Warnings

- Do not publicly embarrass anyone and especially a commander
- Do not ever accuse anyone of lying or stealing – talk around the subject
- Learn to be non-committal as they are
- If you tell them something they will hold you to it
- Never lie to them
- You must use the chain of command
- Do not allow them to get into a situation they are not prepared for

Bottom Line: think about rapport

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Some Warnings

- You will know they are more capable than they admit – push them to their capabilities
- You must be the honest broker between the Iraqis and Coalition forces (reporting, requests, passing information)
- Maintain an even tone even when they seem excited and raise their voices
- You are being watched all the time – set a proper example – Coalition negative actions will always be an excuse
- Do not live in more comfort or better protection than they do
- You may have to “help them” put control measures in place

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Terminal Learning Objective

Understand the skill sets and factors that make an effective military advisor and understand how advisory forces can effectively work to develop Host National Security Forces.